



# **PUBLIC EDUCATION**

*No Better Time to Invest*

## **THE AEU-ACT COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN**

### **FACT SHEET- TIPS ON WRITING LETTERS AND EMAILS**

#### **SOME POINTS TO CONSIDER WHEN WRITING LETTERS OR EMAILS TO NEWSPAPERS OR POLITICIANS**

1. KEEP YOUR EMAILS OR LETTERS POLITE, BRIEF.
2. TRY TO FOCUS ON ONE KEY ISSUE PER LETTER/EMAIL.
3. EMAILS ARE MOST EFFECTIVE IF THEY ARE WRITTEN IN YOUR OWN WORDS AND FROM YOUR PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE.
4. IF YOU WISH TO RECEIVE A RESPONSE, ENSURE YOU INCLUDE YOUR HOME ADDRESS IN YOUR LETTER/EMAIL.
5. IF YOU ARE AN EMPLOYEE OF DET OR CIT, ALWAYS INDICATE THAT YOU ARE WRITING AS A MEMBER OF THE AEU-ACT BRANCH. IN GENERAL PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES ARE NOT PERMITTED TO PUBLICLY COMMENT ON GOVERNMENT POLICY, BUT YOU CAN DO SO AS A MEMBER OF YOUR UNION.
6. IF YOU ARE A PUBLIC SCHOOL PARENT, INDICATE IF YOU ARE A MEMBER OF THE P & C OR SCHOOL BOARD.
7. EXPLAIN HOW THE ISSUE PERSONALLY AFFECTS YOUR WORKING LIFE OR THE WORKING LIFE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS IN GENERAL, BUT NEVER REFER TO SPECIFIC SCHOOLS, WORKPLACES OR STUDENTS.
8. CONSIDER BASING THE CONTENT OF YOUR LETTER/EMAIL AROUND THE DETAILS CONTAINED IN THE FACT SHEETS ON “STAFF WORKLOAD”, “RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF STAFF” AND “MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS”.
9. EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR LOCAL NEWSPAPERS (KEEP LETTERS TO THE EDITOR TO 250 WORDS OR LESS):
  - THE CANBERRA TIMES – [LETTERS.EDITOR@CANBERRATIMES.COM.AU](mailto:LETTERS.EDITOR@CANBERRATIMES.COM.AU)
  - THE CHRONICLE – [NEWS@CHRONICLE.COM.AU](mailto:NEWS@CHRONICLE.COM.AU)
10. CONTACT DETAILS FOR MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:
  - POSTAL ADDRESS: GPO Box 1020, CANBERRA, ACT 2601
  - EDUCATION MINISTER, ANDREW BARR – [BARR@ACT.GOV.AU](mailto:BARR@ACT.GOV.AU)
  - TREASURER, KATY GALLAGHER – [GALLAGHER@ACT.GOV.AU](mailto:GALLAGHER@ACT.GOV.AU)
  - CHIEF MINISTER, JON STANHOPE – [STANHOPE@ACT.GOV.AU](mailto:STANHOPE@ACT.GOV.AU)
  - LIBERAL EDUCATION SPOKESPERSON, STEVE DOSZPOT – [DOSZPOT@PARLIAMENT.ACT.GOV.AU](mailto:DOSZPOT@PARLIAMENT.ACT.GOV.AU)
  - GREENS EDUCATION SPOKESPERSON, MEREDITH HUNTER – [HUNTER@PARLIAMENT.ACT.GOV.AU](mailto:HUNTER@PARLIAMENT.ACT.GOV.AU)
11. YOU MAY WISH TO ADAPT SOME OF THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS TO USE IN YOUR LETTERS/EMAILS:
  - *ONE OF THE KEY FACTORS IN SUSTAINING AND GROWING AN EFFECTIVE PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM IS PROVIDING FAIR AND COMPETITIVE SALARIES AND WORKING CONDITIONS TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN HIGH QUALITY TEACHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF. HOWEVER IN RECENT YEARS THE ACT GOVERNMENT HAS FAILED TO BUDGET FOR THE REQUIRED SALARY INCREASES IN ACT PUBLIC SCHOOLS. URGENT ADDITIONAL FUNDS ARE NEEDED TO ENSURE THAT ALL TEACHER SALARIES ARE COMPETITIVE WITH THOSE INTERSTATE AND WITH THE ACT INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS SECTOR. IN PARTICULAR THERE IS A GROSS DISCREPANCY BETWEEN SCHOOL LEADER B (DEPUTY PRINCIPAL) SALARIES IN THE ACT AND NSW. ADDITIONAL*

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**FUNDS OF \$1,215,000 (PLUS ON-COSTS) ARE IMMEDIATELY REQUIRED, WITHOUT WHICH THE ABILITY TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN SLBs WILL BE SEVERELY JEOPARDISED.**

- **PUBLIC EDUCATION HAS AS ITS FUNDAMENTAL PRECEPT THAT ALL STUDENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO A HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION AND THAT ALL STUDENTS ARE ABLE TO LEARN AND SUCCEED. IT IS THE PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY OF PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS TO PLAN AND IMPLEMENT A RANGE OF INCLUSIVE PROGRAMS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF EVERY STUDENT IN THEIR CARE. HOWEVER, TO DO SO EFFECTIVELY REQUIRES FAIR LEVELS OF FUNDING AND THE RIGHT PEOPLE TARGETED TOWARDS HIGH QUALITY PROGRAMS. THE KIND OF ACTION THAT THE PROFESSION BELIEVES WILL MAKE REAL DIFFERENCES FOR STUDENTS INCLUDE:**
  - **A FUNDING MODEL THAT TARGETS FUNDS TO ACT PUBLIC SCHOOLS ON A NEEDS-BASIS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS WITH IDENTIFIED NEEDS SUCH AS BEHAVIOURAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTURBANCE, MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES, SPEECH THERAPY, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY.**
  - **A RESIDENTIAL OR DAY MENTAL HEALTH CARE FACILITY WITH ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND/OR TRAINING FOR SECONDARY AND PRIMARY STUDENTS, INCLUDING THOSE WHO EXHIBIT VIOLENT BEHAVIOURS.**
  - **ADEQUATE FUNDING TO SUPPORT ALL STUDENTS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS INCLUDING THE INTENSIVE ENGLISH CENTRES AND FUNDS TO TRAIN ALL ESL TEACHERS WHO DO NOT HAVE A SPECIALIST ESL QUALIFICATION.**
  - **INCREASE THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SETTINGS EG. A VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS SCHOOL; EXPAND THE CCCARES PROGRAM FOR YOUNG PARENTS TO COMPLETE YEAR 10 AND 12; EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH ACUTE BEHAVIOURAL DISORDERS – SEE MORE SUGGESTIONS AT ATTACHMENT A – ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS AND SETTINGS.**
  - **INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SCHOOL COUNSELLORS AND STUDENT MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS TO PROPERLY SUPPORT SCHOOLS TO IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE PREVENTATIVE PROGRAMS.**
- **OVER THE PAST DECADE, THE WORKLOADS OF PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS, SUPPORT STAFF AND THOSE IN THE DET CENTRAL OFFICE HAVE INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY. WHILE STAFF IN SCHOOLS MAKE STUDENTS THEIR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY, IT HAS OFTEN BEEN AT THE EXPENSE OF A WORK-LIFE BALANCE OR PERSONAL HEALTH. AEU MEMBERS ARE SAYING “ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.” FOR THE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF AN EXCELLENT ACT PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM, EXCESSIVE WORKLOAD MUST BE ADDRESSED BY PROVIDING ADDITIONAL SCHOOL BASED MANAGEMENT FUNDS FOR THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:**
  - **EMPLOY AT LEAST ONE FULL-TIME IT SPECIALIST AT COMPETITIVE SALARY RATES, AND ADDITIONAL POSITIONS CREATED BASED ON AN AGREED FORMULA USING ENROLMENT NUMBERS.**
  - **EMPLOY AT LEAST 1-2 ADDITIONAL FULL-TIME ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT STAFF, WITH ADDITIONAL POSITIONS CREATED BASED ON AN AGREED FORMULA USING ENROLMENT NUMBERS.**
  - **EMPLOY AT LEAST ONE ADDITIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANT.**
  - **IMPLEMENT OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT PUBLIC SECTOR STANDARDS, INCLUDING INTERNAL TEMPERATURES, ERGONOMIC FURNITURE AND IT HARDWARE AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT.**
  - **RESTORE FACE-TO-FACE TEACHING HOURS IN THE SECONDARY SECTOR TO 18 HOURS PER WEEK FOR LEVEL 1 TEACHERS.**

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- *REDUCE FACE-TO-FACE TEACHING HOURS IN THE PRESCHOOL AND PRIMARY SECTORS TO 18 HOURS PER WEEK FOR LEVEL 1 TEACHERS.*
- *REDUCE CLASS SIZES TO REASONABLE MAXIMUMS NOT AVERAGES ACROSS THE SYSTEM.*
- *RELEASE ALL TEACHERS FROM FACE-TO-FACE TEACHING FOR AT LEAST THREE DAYS PER SEMESTER FOR THE COMPILING, MODERATING AND WRITING OF STUDENT REPORTS.*

**STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS DESERVE THE BEST!  
THERE'S NO BETTER TIME FOR THE ACT GOVERNMENT TO INVEST!**

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